

26 Aug 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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A. GS 1 Related

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. ‘Raising age of marriage will pose problems’

Context:

The Indian Prime Minister had stated in his Independence Day speech that the government may take a relook at the age of marriage of women.

Details:

According to activists, raising the age of marriage from 18 to 21 for women will lead to an increase in parental backlash against young adults who marry against the wishes of their parents and will lead to the criminalisation of sexual activity.

This topic has been covered in the [16th August 2020 CNA: Govt. may review the age of marriage - PM.](#)

B. GS 2 Related

Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. New Bench to hear 2009 Bhushan case

Context:

A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice Arun Mishra, has deferred the 2009 contempt case against civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan.

Read more about proceedings for criminal contempt of court against lawyer-activist Prashant Bhushan covered in [CNA dated July 27, 2020](#) and [CNA dated Aug 2, 2020](#).

2. SC satisfied at royal family's affidavit

This issue has been covered in the [14th July 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

Also Read: [Padmanabhaswamy Temple Verdict & Implications: RSTV- Big Picture](#)

3. Arunachal to seek 6th Schedule status

This topic has been covered in the [14th August 2020 CNA: Arunachal groups push for 6th Schedule status](#).

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. China floats BRICS 5G base as India mulls ban

Context:

China has proposed the creation of what it calls a 'BRICS innovation base' in China to take forward 5G and Artificial Intelligence (AI) cooperation among the [BRICS](#) nations and strengthen practical cooperation with the BRICS.

Details:

- China's Minister of Industry and Information Technology urged fellow nations, including India, to boost cooperation in areas including 5G and AI.
- Russia has said it is open to working with Chinese telecommunications firm Huawei on 5G. Huawei has been largely banned by the United States.
- In South Africa, Huawei is providing services to three of its telecom operators in the roll-out of their 5G networks.
- Brazil has allowed participation in trials but is yet to take a final call.

Concerns for India:

- The move could pose an awkward question for India, which is the only country in the grouping that is leaning towards excluding Chinese participation in the roll-out of its national 5G network.
- India is unlikely to allow Chinese participation in 5G, particularly in the wake of recent moves to tighten investment from China and to ban 59 Chinese apps, citing national security concerns.
- Indian intelligence assessments have expressed concerns about the possible direct or indirect links of several Chinese companies, including Huawei, with the Chinese military.

Way forward:

- The Huawei dilemma is a reminder for India that it needs to skill its engineers better. India has millions but they lack skills.
- India must start exploring 5G standards and equipment locally.
- India needs a new team of experts that can build indigenous solutions.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. 'Govt. open to tweaks in credit guarantee scheme'

Context:

Finance Minister has said that the government is open to further tweaking the ₹3-lakh crore credit guarantee scheme for providing collateral-free loans to small businesses.

Read more about the Credit Guarantee Scheme covered in the [2nd August 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. NGT slams Ministry's report on clean air programme

Context:

The [National Green Tribunal](#) has condemned the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) over its report on the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).

Details:

- The NGT has disapproved the submission of the MoEF that a committee, upon further deliberation, has concluded that 20-30% reduction of air pollution by 2024 under the [National Clean Air Programme \(NCAP\)](#) seems realistic.

Issue:

- NGT said that the MoEF's stand that pollution could not be controlled except to the extent of a certain percentage was directly hit by the constitutional and statutory mandate.
 - It argued the MoEF's view was against the constitutional mandate under Article 21.
 - It argued that the Right to Clean Air stands recognised as part of [Right to Life](#) and failure to address air pollution is the denial of Right to Life.
- It argued that the monitoring mechanism for enforcement was not clear.
- It also raised concerns that there is no data on how much pollution has been reduced in the last two years.

Way forward:

- NGT said that the enforcement of 'Sustainable Development' principle and 'Public Trust Doctrine' requires strict measures to be adopted to give effect to the mandate of international obligations for which the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and other laws have been enacted.
 - The guiding principle of sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
 - The Public Trust Doctrine enjoins upon the government to protect the resources for the enjoyment of the general public rather than to permit their use for private ownership or commercial purposes.
- Violation of laid down air pollution levels resulting in a large number of deaths and diseases needs to be addressed expeditiously.
- Targeted time of reduction of pollution loads needs to be reduced and planned steps need to be sternly implemented on the ground.

Read more about National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) covered in [10th January 2019 PIB Summary and Analysis](#).

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. ICICI to use satellites for farm credit

Context:

ICICI Bank has announced the introduction of usage of satellite data-imagery from earth observation satellites to assess the creditworthiness of its customers belonging to the farm sector.

Details:

- The bank is the first in India and among a few globally to do so.
- It will use the data to measure an array of parameters related to the land, irrigation and crop patterns.
- The data would be used in combination with demographic and financial parameters to make faster lending decisions for farmers.

Benefits:

- Since land verification is done in a contactless manner, credit assessments take only a few days as against the industry practice of up to 15 days.
- Use of technology helps farmers with existing credit to enhance their eligibility.
- New-to-credit farmers can get better access to credit.

Earth Observation Satellites

- An Earth observation satellite or a remote sensing satellite is a satellite used or designed for Earth observation (EO) from orbit.
- They are intended for uses such as environmental monitoring, meteorology, map making and others.
- Starting with IRS-1A in 1988, [ISRO](#) has launched many operational remote sensing satellites.
- Currently, 13 operational satellites are in Sun-synchronous orbit and 4 in Geostationary orbit.
- The data from these satellites are used for several applications covering agriculture, water resources, urban planning, rural development, mineral prospecting, environment, forestry, ocean resources and disaster management.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SOCIAL ISSUES

1. The marginalisation of justice in public discourse

The author opined that, in India, while self-interest and national glory dominate, concern for distributive justice is rare.

Concerns:

- Given the compulsion to advance our self-interest, the burden of sacrifice for achieving national goals is easily passed on to those who are powerless to resist it.
- The thought that the burden of realising national goals such as development must be shared equally by all is missing.

What is distributive justice and why does it matter?

- The idea of distributive justice requires not only a social condition marked by an absence of love or familiarity, but also the circumstances of justice.
- For instance, a society where everything is abundantly available would not need justice. Without the necessity of sharing, justice becomes redundant.
- Also, in a society with massive scarcity, justice is impossible. In order to survive, each person is compelled to grab whatever happens to be available.
- Justice, therefore, is possible and necessary in societies with moderate scarcity.
- Justice also requires that people are neither totally alone nor organically united with others.
- And, if one was totally fused with others, with no distinction between self and other, then again, sharing will be unnecessary.

- To sum up, justice acquires value in societies with moderate scarcity, where people are forced to deal with those who they don't love.
- It requires a moral psychology in which humans are neither wholly selfish nor entirely benevolent.
- Since most societies share these conditions, it may safely be concluded that justice is a necessary social virtue and has great moral value.

Giving persons their due:

- The basic idea of justice is that 'each person gets what is properly due to him or her', that the benefits and burdens of society be distributed in a manner that gives each person his or her due.
- In hierarchical notions, what is due to a person is established by her or his place within a hierarchical system. For instance, certain groups are born privileged. On this conception, justice requires that the benefits and burdens be unequally shared or distributed.
- This conception of justice has rarely remained unchallenged.
 - Innumerable examples can be cited in Indian history, where aspects of this hierarchical notion had been temporarily opposed — in the early teachings of the Buddha, passages in Indian epics, Bhakti poetry, and protest movements such as Veerashaivism.
- In present times, however, this challenge has become robust, explicit and sustained. This is so because of the prevalence of the idea that each person, regardless of caste, class, colour, creed or gender, has equal moral worth.
- If so, we need a different conception of justice, of sharing or distributing, of giving people their due that is consistent with equal dignity.
- In societies still infested with live hierarchies, people must first struggle for recognition as equals, for what might be called basic social justice.
- Then, they must decide how to share all social benefits and burdens among equal persons — the essence of egalitarian distributive justice.

Needs and Desert:

Two main contenders exist for interpreting what is due to persons of equal moral worth.

- **Need-based principle:** what is due to a person is whatever is necessary for general human well-being. Since our basic needs are identical, justice requires their fulfilment in every single person. Beyond this basic threshold, our needs usually vary, and therefore justice further requires the fulfilment of different needs.
- **Principle of desert:** determined not by birth or tradition but by a person's own qualities, for instance, natural talent or productive effort. This underpins the idea of equal opportunity to all, albeit with justified inequalities of outcome.

Conclusion:

- Most reasonable egalitarian conceptions of justice try to find a balance between need and desert.
- They try to ensure a distribution of goods and abilities (benefits) that satisfies everyone's needs, and a fair distribution of social burdens or sacrifices required for fulfilling them.
- After this, rewards are permissible to those who by virtue of natural gift, social learning and personal effort, deserve more.
- Our society is afflicted by deep material, cultural and knowledge-related inequalities which are growing by the day.
- A deafening silence on social and distributive justice is more common.
- It is therefore imperative to ask where we stand in relation to different forms of egalitarian justice mentioned in our Preamble.
- We are falling way short of standards of social and distributive justice. For the trend to be reversed, putting justice back into public discourse should be the priority.

1. Down, but not out

Context:

The UN counterterrorism chief's statement to the Security Council on the continuing presence of Islamic State (IS) terrorists in West Asia, Africa and elsewhere is a serious warning to the countries in these regions.

Background:

- At its height, the Islamic State held about a third of Syria and 40 percent of Iraq.
- By December 2017 it had lost 95 percent of its territory.
- In December 2018, President Donald Trump declared that ISIS was defeated and signalled the US's intention to withdraw all 2,000 troops supporting the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in Syria.
- But the SDF continued its offensive and in February 2019 launched the final siege on ISIS forces in Baghouz, the last holdout. Baghouz fell in March 2019. This formally ended the caliphate's claim to any territory.

Concerns:

- Two years after the Sunni jihadist group was declared defeated, more than 10,000 IS fighters remain active in Iraq and Syria. IS-driven terror attacks are on the rise.
- Iraq and Syria are particularly vulnerable to the IS's resurgence as these countries are yet to be fully stabilised after the wars.

Political instability in West Asia and North Africa:

- Ever since they lost territories, IS fighters withdrew from the front lines and started operating in cells in the deserts, mountains and hinterlands of conflict-ridden countries.
- Political instability in parts of West Asia and North Africa is allowing the IS space to operate.

Syria:

- Though the Bashar al-Assad government has practically won the civil war, Syria is now a divided country.
 - While the government controls most of the territories, a coalition of jihadists and rebels is running the Idlib province.
 - In the northeast, the Kurdish rebels have declared autonomy.
 - On the Syrian-Turkish border, Turkey, backed by pro-Turkish rebels, has carved out a buffer and has been in permanent conflict with the Kurds.

Iraq:

- Iraq, after months of protests and instability, has finally got a government.
- However, Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi is torn between the U.S. and Iran.
- Pro-Iran Shia militias continue to target U.S. troops inside Iraq, which could turn the country into a battlefield between Washington and Tehran.

Afghanistan:

- In war-torn Afghanistan, it continues to stage attacks, targeting ethnic and religious minorities.

Libya:

- Libya has two governments, which were fighting each other until the recent ceasefire (in August 2020).
- The Libyan conflict has spilled over into Mali and Burkina Faso, where jihadists have established a solid presence.
- Chaos breeds militancy, and as the main group here is the IS, it would remain active as long as these countries remain unstable.

West Africa:

- The terror outfit has a province in West Africa with nearly 3,000 fighters, according to the UN.

Way forward:

- Though the IS no longer controls any big city, its rise from a breakaway faction of al-Qaeda in Iraq to one of the world's most potent terrorist groups should be a lesson for all stakeholders.
- The IS has its roots in the U.S. invasion of Iraq. It started growing by exploiting the civil war in Syria. The regional governments, as well as their international backers (and rivals), should be mindful of this fact.
- If they fail to address the regional fault-lines and continue to fight each other, the jihadists could emerge winners once again.

Category: ECONOMY

1. Magnets for manufacturing

The editorial throws light upon the importance of devising State-specific industrialisation strategies in coordination with the Centre to improve manufacturing in India.

Context:

- It is a popular belief that, in the aftermath of the pandemic, several manufacturing companies operating from China will relocate their businesses to other destinations, including India.
- Discussions have been initiated by many American, Japanese, and South Korean companies based in China with the Indian government to relocate their plants to India.

Why are companies exiting China?

- Countries have come to realise that relying heavily on China for building capacities and sourcing manufacturing goods is not an ideal business strategy due to supply chain disruptions in the country caused by COVID-19.
- Fear of Chinese dominance over the supply of essential industrial goods persists.
- There is a growing risk and uncertainty involved in operating from or dealing with China in the light of geopolitical and trade conflicts between China and other countries, particularly the U.S.

Prime Minister's emphasis on using the [COVID-19](#) crisis as an opportunity to pursue the goal of a self-reliant India or Atmanirbhar Bharat must be viewed against this background.

Can India succeed in attracting manufacturing firms and jobs from China?

India's position:

- While China ranks first in contribution to world manufacturing output, India ranks sixth.
- India's share of manufacturing in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stood at 15% in 2018. This is only half of China's figure.
- Industry value added grew at an average annual rate of 10.68% since China opened up its economy in 1978. In contrast, the manufacturing sector has grown at 7% after India opened up its economy.
- In 2018, with the world share of 18%, China was the largest exporter of manufactured goods next to the [European Union](#). India is not part of the top 10 exporters that accounted for 83% of world manufacturing exports in 2018.

Challenges facing India:

- Compared to China, India faces numerous constraints in promoting the manufacturing sector.
- There are infrastructure constraints, a disadvantageous tax policy environment, a non-conducive regulatory environment, high cost of industrial credit, poor quality of the workforce, rigid labour laws, restrictive trade policies, low R&D expenditure, delays and constraints in land acquisition, and the inability to attract large-scale foreign direct investment into the manufacturing sector.

Way forward:

- Unless the challenges are effectively addressed, the dream of making India a manufacturing powerhouse rivalling China would be difficult to realise.
- An important requirement for the development of the manufacturing sector is the availability of land area.
- Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana, and West Bengal – the States that have large land area but contribute disproportionately little in manufacturing GSDP must be encouraged to scale up manufacturing activities.
- Strong and carefully designed policy actions on the part of individual States would improve India's overall investment climate, thereby boosting investments, jobs, and economic growth.
- In addition to its initiatives aimed at attracting manufacturing companies looking to relocate their plants to India from China, the Centre has urged the States to evolve their plans.
- Since India follows a federal government system, a lasting solution to these constraints cannot be possible without the active participation of State governments.
- Effective policy coordination between the Centre and the States is essential.
- The need of the hour is to instil teamwork and leverage ideas through sharing the best practices of the Centre and States, across the manufacturing sector.

F. Prelims Facts

1. Viraat to head to Alang yard

What's in News?

Decommissioned aircraft carrier Viraat is set to be scrapped at a ship-breaking yard at Alang in Gujarat.

- Viraat is a Centaur class aircraft carrier weighing 27,800 tonnes.
- It served in the British Navy as HMS Hermes for 25 years from 1959 to 1984.

- It was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1987 after refurbishment and had operated Harrier fighter jets.
- It was decommissioned from service in March 2017.
- Several attempts by the Navy to preserve the carrier, by converting it into a museum or by other means, failed.

Note:

Vikrant is India's first carrier. The carrier was eventually scrapped.

G. Tidbits

1. Two-wheelers neither luxury nor sin goods: FM

What's in News?

Quoting that two-wheelers are neither luxury nor sin goods, the Finance Minister has opined that it can be considered for a GST rate revision.

- It was said that a rate revision proposal for two-wheelers would be taken up by the GST Council.
- In 2019, the country's largest two-wheeler maker had urged the government to consider a phase-wise reduction in GST on the segment, starting with bringing bikes up to 150 cc into the 18% slab.
- Two-wheelers currently attract 28% GST.

2. Wide-ranging reforms must for sustainable growth: RBI

What's in News?

Cautioning that India's potential output may undergo a structural downshift following the pandemic, the Reserve Bank made a strong case for deep-seated and wide-ranging reforms.

- In its 'assessment and prospects' that forms part of its Annual Report for the year 2019-20, it said that the reforms are essential to regain losses and return to the path of sustainable economic growth.
- It said that the reforms are needed in factor and product markets, the financial sector, legal architecture, and international competitiveness would be needed to regain potential output losses and return the economy to a path of strong and sustainable growth with macroeconomic and financial stability.

3. India to protest Pak. claims on terror at UN

What's in News?

India will approach the UN Security Council President to bring to his notice a series of false claims levelled by Pakistan on [terrorism](#), in one of the strongest responses by the Indian permanent mission so far.

- The note will include the fact that Pakistan’s UN Permanent Representative claimed to have addressed a [UNSC](#) debate on terrorism, which was open only for Ambassadors of the 15 Security Council members, which don’t include Pakistan.
- This is not the first time Pakistan has tried to make allegations against India on the issue of terrorism.
- Pakistan, that has been greylisted at the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), is also trying to build a case given that India will face its routine scrutiny or “Mutual Evaluation Report” (MER) on terrorism financing and money laundering issues at [FATF](#) beginning February 2021, with a plenary discussion in October 2020.
- Officials say they see a pattern in Pakistan’s recent statements, with a view to targeting India ahead of January 2021, when India will join as a non-permanent member for a two-year term at the UN Security Council.
- India is lodging its protest formally with the Indonesian Ambassador to the UN, who chaired the UNSC meeting on terrorism, to discuss the latest report on Al Qaeda and ISIL (Islamic State) operations.
 - These reports are provided every six months by the UN Secretary-General.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to the National Clean Air Programme:

1. It aims to achieve a national-level target of 20-30% reduction of PM2.5 and PM10 concentration by 2024.
2. It is a nationwide programme executed by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
3. 2015 is the base year for the National Clean Air Programme.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 2 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. 1, 2 and 3

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: b

Explanation:

- National Clean Air Programme is a nationwide programme executed by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
- It aims to achieve a national-level target of 20-30% reduction of PM2.5 and PM10 concentration by 2024.
- 2017 is the base year for the National Clean Air Programme.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to Earth Observation Satellites:

1. They are intended for uses such as environmental monitoring, meteorology, map making and disaster management.
2. The Earth-observation satellites include the Resourcesat, RISAT series and the Oceansat series.
3. They are placed in Geostationary orbit only.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 1, 2 and 3
- d. 2 and 3 only

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: a

Explanation:

- An Earth observation satellite or a remote sensing satellite is a satellite used or designed for Earth observation (EO) from orbit.
- They are intended for uses such as environmental monitoring, meteorology, map making and others.
- Currently, 13 operational Earth Observation satellites are in Sun-synchronous orbit and 4 in Geostationary orbit.

Q3. Which of the following is India's first aircraft carrier?

- a. INS Vikrant
- b. INS Viraat
- c. INS Shardul
- d. INS Vikramaditya

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: a

Explanation:

INS Vikrant is India's first aircraft carrier.

Q4. Consider the followings statements with respect to SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS):

1. It is a permanent organ of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation formed in 2004.
2. It is headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
3. It serves to promote cooperation of member states against terrorism, separatism and extremism.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 1, 2 and 3
- d. 3 only

CHECK ANSWERS:-

Answer: c

Explanation:

All the statements are correct.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Critically analyse the government policies for dealing with and mitigating the hazards of air pollution in India. (GS 3 Environment and Ecology) (15 Marks, 250 Words).
2. Political instability in parts of West Asia and North Africa is allowing the Islamic State space to operate. Discuss how the re-emergence of the Islamic State could pose a serious challenge. (GS 3 Security) (15 Marks, 250 Words).

